

To: Communications Director[communications@silverton.co.us]
From: Communications Director
Sent: Sat 8/15/2015 1:38:02 AM
Subject: Silverton and San Juan County Incident Management Team Media Release

San Juan County / Town of Silverton (SJC/TOS)

MEDIA RELEASE

August 14, 2015

Gold King Mine Spill – Incident

Anthony Edwards, Public Information Officer

The purpose of this media briefing is to address the historical context of this environmental disaster and the Incident Management Team's future priorities:

- The San Juan County/Town of Silverton Incident Management Team continues to coordinate incident management related to public safety and public health,
- As local, state, Tribal and federal agencies evaluate future steps in response to this environmental disaster we want to offer the following:
- San Juan County / Silverton is a historical gold and silver mining district. Millions of dollars of precious metals were extracted from these mountains from the 1870's through the 1980's.
- As a result of both successful and unsuccessful mining during a period exceeding a century, dozens of discharging mines remain within the Mining District.
- Many of those mines and resulting remains (tailings) contain mining materials some of which can be harmful to the public and wildlife.
- What is important to note is that as all parties move forward, for decades, San Juan County and the Town of Silverton through collaboration with the EPA, BLM, USFS, DRMS, CPW and the CDPHE, as well as other governmental entities have continually participated with efforts to address the environmental issues within the mining district and will continue to do so.
- Since the 1990's, San Juan County and the Town of Silverton have worked through the Animas River Stakeholder Group (ASRG) to improve water quality and habitats in the Animas River through a collaborative process to encourage participation from all interested parties.

- ASRG has been responsible for many improvements within the Animas River watershed over the last two decades, although many issues remain to be addressed.

- Many citizens of this community have debated the options for remediation, which include those presented by private, corporate, local, state and federal stakeholders.

- Critically, at the time of the spill event, the EPA was working to attempt to remediate the Gold King Mine toxic waste with the support of the Animas River Stakeholders Group.

- San Juan County and the Town of Silverton were, and are committed to working with our federal, Tribal, state and local affected Animas River partners to insure such an environmental disaster does not occur again.

In closing, this Incident Management Team has transitioned from an emergency response to a long term recovery team.